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**POCKET GUIDE TO**  
**BURMA**

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UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT  
URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

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*Prepared by*

ARMY INFORMATION BRANCH, ASF  
UNITED STATES ARMY

REVISED EDITION

APRIL 1944

**A POCKET GUIDE TO  
BURMA**

**WAR AND NAVY DEPARTMENTS · WASHINGTON · D C**







# A POCKET GUIDE TO BURMA

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### INTRODUCTION

*"I claim we got a hell of a beating. We got run out of Burma and it is humiliating as hell. I think we ought to find out what caused it, go back and retake it."*

THOSE WORDS of a famous American soldier carried all the way around the world when the last of the Allied forces retreated from Burma into India during the first stages of the war in Asia. The speaker was Lt. Gen. Joe Stilwell who had led the retreat after trying to stop the Japanese in the fighting from Rangoon to Mandalay.

Because they were fighting words, they appealed strongly to Americans. Because they were prophetic words, you and your outfit have been given an extraordinary as-

oment. In the time which has elapsed since General  
well and his men were run out of Burma, we have  
nd out what caused our humiliation. Now we are en-  
ged in retaking the country, not solely for the purpose  
occupying it and depriving the Japanese of its rich  
put of raw materials, but to build it as a base which  
l give fresh support to China, and from which our  
ces can run the Japanese out of Southeastern Asia and  
k to the crumbling shelter of their own islands.

That, in general, is your mission. There are two main  
ds toward its accomplishment. They are equally im-  
tant because they contribute to the same end. The first  
o destroy, or make powerless, the enemies of your coun-  
. The second is to win the friendship and confidence of  
people who do not bear ill will toward us and who may  
ready to work or to strike a blow for our side. To win  
friendly acts the esteem of those who have been antago-  
tic toward us is equally to be desired.

The beginning of the cure for the misunderstandings  
ich lead to war is an intelligently directed effort toward  
understanding of other peoples and of their problems  
d customs. This begets constructive good will and  
ive cooperation in the establishing of a better world.  
e Americans are among the best educated soldiers in the  
orld. Because the richness of our land has given us a

greater opportunity than any other people on earth, we should have greater kindness toward others and especial consideration for their rights and for their dignity. To be deserving of what we have we should not parade our advantages but should accept them in humbleness of spirit.

It is the confident belief of the Army of the United States and of the people which it represents that you will make these ideas a part of your faith and practice as a fighting American, and that you will apply them in your daily experiences among the people of Burma as well as in your service together with other Allied soldiers serving in this same theater. This soldier's guide book was prepared for that purpose. It is not a tourist's introduction to Burma. Its object is not to entertain but to instruct so that you will be started on your way toward an efficient service in the most important undertaking of your lifetime.

Because you were sent to Burma, you are more fortunate than a majority of your comrades in the Army of the United States. In normal times—before the Japanese ravaged it—Burma was one of the most beautiful lands of the earth, and although its palaces and temples have been cruelly used by the enemy and many of the homes despoiled, the natural beauty of the land remains unimpaired. Too, the Burmese are a docile and normally hospitable people and if you treat them fairly and learn to honor the

ple rules which are important to their national and racial dignity, they will respond in a friendly spirit. Finally, the country itself is not too difficult. Its climate is not extreme. There are periods of very heavy rainfall and of excessive heat. But there is low humidity in the driest seasons, and despite the heavy rains of the monsoon, Central Burma is not sodden and fever-ridden. Consequently, the safeguarding of your health, while necessitating extra precautions on your part, is not the extraordinarily difficult problem faced by some of our forces in other tropical and near-tropical countries. That is so, even though the hills surrounding Central Burma are very malarious. If you observe the common-sense rules which will be discussed briefly in this guide, and follow the more detailed instructions which will be given you by your company and medical officers, you will continue to be marked "fit" and will profit by your experience.

The wise soldier is one who talks little when in the company of strangers, but who acquires knowledge wherever he can pick it up, knowing that anything he learns may some day be grist for his mill, and that what he learns will add to the rudiments of soldiering during his military life and will contribute to his success as a civilian.

These are important things for you to remember. They are not stuck in here merely as a twopenny sermon.

## THE LAND OF BURMA

THIS land which a great poet once romantically and incorrectly described as a place where "there ain't no Ten Commandments and a man can raise a thirst" is approximately the area of Texas, but with fewer wide-open spaces. The means of transportation are generally quite primitive, and the lines of communication are relatively limited except for the great watercourses which cut through Burma running north and south, and for the roadways paralleling these watercourses. The roads and tracks running east and west through the country are inadequate and the distances seem vast.

Were you to fly over it in a bomber, you would be impressed by how few were its cities and how much of its cultivated lowland area was given over to rice fields. For the most part, it is an extremely rugged mountain country



its ranges spreading from border to border are cut through by some of the largest rivers on earth, one draining down from the snows of the Himalayas. Therefore the back country is quite inaccessible. It is frequented by the quarry prized by the big game hunter, as the leopard, the tiger, and the great buffalo called "saing," which is reputed to be the fiercest animal on

Burma lies between India on the west and China and Siam on the east. It was out of this last-named country that the Japanese invaded in 1942, moving up from the narrow and attenuated "tail" of Burmese territory which flanks lower Thailand. There was less than one million of British defending Burma at that time, supported by some Burmese regiments and police forces. This small land army received sterling support from America's famed "Flying Tigers" who were then in China's service. Their resistance to the Japanese along the Salween line, coupled with the action of the British infantry, were one of the few bright spots in an otherwise cheerless battle. But when the Japanese got over the Salween, the fate of Lower Burma was sealed and Rangoon had to be evacuated. The enemy had won the keys to the country. The fight was continued in Upper Burma, and although the Japanese had already cut through the lower (railway)



link in the Burma Road, via which China received military supplies from Britain and the United States, the second stage of the campaign developed around the effort to hold the railhead and the highway portion of the Burma Road. The defensive operations were carried out along the valleys of Burma's two other great rivers—the Irrawaddy and the Sittang.

Chinese regiments, lacking in artillery, ammunition, and everything but willingness to fight for the Allied cause, came down from the North and joined with the British. The British could spare only meager forces from the other theaters. We sent nothing but a stout-hearted commander and a few aviators because we were not ready.

Thus the campaign wore through to its inevitable conclusion. We took our "Hell of a beating" and the defending forces did well to destroy the oil fields along the Irrawaddy—which, exclusive of the Middle East, are the major source of petroleum on the Asiatic mainland—and to save a few tired remnants of the two defending groups which, despite terrible losses, stayed game and retreated into the Indian state of Assam and the Chinese province of Yunnan.

This all too brief description of the geography of the campaign provides likewise an outline of the economic geography of Burma. Mountains cover its frontiers to the west, north, and east, and to get over these ranges at any

point is a considerable task for an army. Most of the cultivated and arable parts of the country are in the southern part of Upper Burma where the great rivers wash down to the sea, forming great flats of land from the soil eroded from distant mountain peaks.

The shape of the country might be compared to a cupped hand with the outside of the palm representing the coastal plain. These great natural mountain barriers and the accessibility of the coast, coupled with the presence of adequate harborage, give Burma unique military strength. The army which is strong enough to get into it at the present time will be strong enough to hold it and to make a fortress of it from which to continue the offensive against the enemy.

### **MEET THE PEOPLE**

MOST of Burma's population live in the valleys of the Irrawaddy, Sittang, and Salween, and upon the fertile deltas. They are a nonwarlike people, and under normal circumstances Americans can count upon their friendship. The record shows, however, that a small percentage of them were willing to swallow the promises made by the Japanese, and actively aided them at the time the country was invaded. There was a Fifth Column which pillaged the cities, harassed the British rear, and made the retreat

difficult, in marked contrast with the loyal action of the native military forces.

You are given this reminder because of what it suggests as to your personal conduct. Though you are to be associated with a friendly people they are not to be given your confidence. Many of them have had to deal with the enemy for an extended period, and some of them have been active enemy agents. Therefore, a continuing vigilance is required of you. While in service in the United States you heard much about the importance of security; in other words, the safeguarding of military information. The application of the lessons then learned is now to be strictly applied. Do not discuss military affairs with the people. Should they question you, act courteously, but either change the subject or profess ignorance. When you are in the company of your comrades but away from camp, use the utmost caution in speaking of anything pertaining to our forces, even if your conversation is directed toward a friend in the service. There is always the danger that you will be overheard. This is a bit of advice on a very large subject. More specific instructions will be given you by your commander.

Precautions of this kind will not lose you the respect of the Burmese. In fact, the essence of getting along well in a strange country is to mind one's business and let the other

low enjoy that same privilege. To exercise a lively curiosity about the manner of life in this strange country to which you have been ordered will not offend the Burmese, provided that you act with restraint and courtesy and that you do not tell the permanent residents what is wrong with their country. It is your privilege to tell them about our own country, or about your family, or to discuss other such general topics. But it is your duty not to talk to them about the Army of the United States or to engage in political discussions with them.

The words from an encyclopedia are as appropriate as any in describing the general characteristics of the Burmese. "The women are more industrious and businesslike than the men but their school education has been neglected. The Burmese women enjoy an amount of freedom unusual among non-European races. As a whole the Burmese are characterized by cleanliness, a sense of honor, and a love of sport, but addicted to a life of ease and laziness."

In sum, and not exclusive of the last point, those are qualities which are likely to appeal to an American, and which convey a promise that your tour of duty in Burma will be attended by friendly relations with an interesting and relatively progressive people. The unknown private inipling's poem, *The Road to Mandalay*, found them so, and grew homesick for the land, even though he badly

scrambled its geography, as you will discover if you ever get to the Moulmein pagoda and try to look "eastward to the sea."

The women of Burma still smoke "whacking white cheroots" and the chewing of betel nuts is enough of a national habit that you may at first be astonished by the number of Burmese with unsightly and badly discolored teeth and gums. Despite this bad first appearance, your lasting impression will be one of a people who have reached a relatively high order of living. The Burmese are Buddhists and their religion occupies a foremost part of their life, and is one of the chief reasons for the picturesque-ness of the country, every town and hamlet being marked by its own pagoda, and generally by a monastery. The spiritual head of every village is the yellow-robed pongyi, or monk.

Other fixtures of the average village in Upper Burma are a large encircling fence for the purpose of keeping out robbers and wild beasts, and the village school house. Even in the country districts, and except for the hill tribes in the more remote mountain areas, the Burman men get at least a smattering of education. They use it to good advantage and their religion is conducive to a generous attitude toward life. Also, many of the men spend some part of their life in a monastery. The chief precept of the



*Chocking White Cheroot*



*Yueh  
Dance*

Buddhist is to do such good works on earth that he will be prepared for the next reincarnation. The bestowal of alms, the giving of rice to priests, the founding of a monastery, or the building of a rest house for travelers are all acts of high merit.

These are things which the American can understand and respect even though he practices another religion. Therefore you need hardly be counseled that in your life among the Burmese you will be ever mindful that a considerate and dignified attitude toward all things pertaining to the religious life of the country is paramount, and is the beginning of a good relationship between our Army and Burma's people. In their religion, you will find much that is beautiful and little or nothing which seems by American standards either barbaric or unreasonable.

The hill peoples are not exclusively Buddhist. Although many of them are Animist (which is a term pertaining to primitive nature worship), Christianity has made much greater progress among the hill tribes than among the Burmese. The most advanced of the tribes, for example the one known as the Sgaw Karens, are mainly Christian. The Chins, on the other hand, are Buddhist. The outlook and mode of life of the tribes is usually high or low according to the accessibility of the lands which they occupy. In the more remote mountains, the practice of head hunting is

all in favor. That may seem like the depth of savagery, but the world is certainly suffering from worse evils.

The Burmans like color, life, and excitement. There is nothing about their religious practice which tends to humble the person or subdue the spirit. Both sexes prefer to wear silks of bright but delicate shades, and even the poorest possesses at least one silk "lungyi," which is the national dress, being a cylindrical skirt worn folded over in a simple fold in the front and reaching to the ankles. Beside the lungyi, the men wear a rather somber short jacket. The woman's upper garment, called an "aingyi," is similar, only it is sometimes double-breasted instead of single.

It is now quite general for Burmans to cut the hair as we do ours. But where the old customs remain, the men wear their straight black hair tied in a knot on one side of the head. The women dress their hair with coconut oil and wear it coiled in a cylinder atop the head. The male head-dress is a "gaunbaung," which is a strip of vividly colored silk worn wound round the head.

The picturesque people described in the preceding paragraphs comprise about two-thirds of Burma's total population of approximately 15,000,000. Most of the remaining third is made up of two other Mongoloid tribes—the Karens and the Shans—who resemble the Burmese but speak different languages and have their own dress and



customs. From the Karenni country come the celebrated "brass necked" Padaung women who are known to our circusgoers because of the coils of wire which have stretched their necks to giraffelike proportions.

Immigrants from India, numbering about 1,000,000, are the most considerable outside bloc in the population. They have moved into Burma during recent years. This tide reversed itself quite suddenly when the Japanese attacked Burma. The Burmans have a strong national pride, embracing certain ideas about Burma for the Burmans. Especially irritating had been the period when Burma was administered as a province of India. They had resented the presence of the Indians because some of the latter had succeeded in money lending and middleman activities. When the Japanese came like locusts, many of the Indians, beset on the one hand by Burmese hostility and on the other by the threat of Japanese oppression, fled to the passes leading to their own country. The lot of those who could not get away has probably been particularly difficult ever since.

Perhaps the brief account of Burma's people here given you errs greatly on the bright side. But your guide has discussed them as they were before the great Japanese pestilence swept over the land—highly civilized, altogether decent, reasonably progressive, and filled with the joy of living. The hard fate which came to them was not

their making and certainly they merited better things. What has happened since, this book cannot relate. There has been a great black-out over their land from the time the Japanese moved in. States like Japan and forces like the Japanese Army have no compassion for defenseless peoples no matter how deserving. There is every reason to believe that they have suffered greatly, that the gay silks are faded and tattered, and that the song, the banter, and the laughter are gone from them, and that they are not now able to deal with other people in an atmosphere of good will and hospitality.

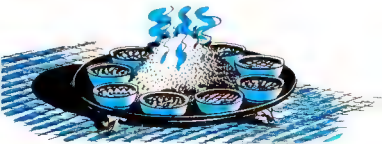
Without understanding what has happened to them, you will be ill-prepared to take them as you find them. Burma is half a world around the world from the United States. You are probably going farther from your own home and your own people for the sake of your country than you have ever gone before. In those years when you had no direct personal experience to consider how the speeding of communications and the tremendous changes in the nature of military warfare were altering the basic considerations of our national defense, it probably never occurred to you that you might be a day soldier in Asia.

And it may seem to you now, when you consider it idly, that your military service in Burma and along the road to Mandalay has scarcely any connection with your duty to the

United States. Yet East and West—the people of Burma and the people of the United States—do meet on that common ground where men and women the earth over believe that the true foundation of a true peace and of international order is common decency and fair play in the personal and national life.

The people of Burma understood that as we ourselves understand it. They kept a neat and orderly house. Though they had the same aspirations for independence as other progressive peoples, they usually sought this goal by peaceful measures and by negotiation, rather than by recourse to arms. They have always used their land well, and their dealings with one another have not been tainted by greed and exploitation. Materially as well, they had contributed greatly to the advance of civilization.

The enemies of such a people should not be permitted to go unpunished so long as there are American soldiers capable of dealing with these same enemies.



## WHEN DO WE EAT?

BEFORE hearing anything of the Burmese diet, you should do well to consider your own. Every wastage of pound of food puts an unnecessary strain upon the United States where people—your people—already are rationed.

To keep you supplied with food American ships are traveling a greater distance than to supply any other American force. Therefore you should conserve food and encourage your comrades to do likewise. That is common sense. The saving of food is as important a step in defeating Axis as the killing of enemy soldiers.

Burma was once a land of plenty. Its staple food was rice, but the Burmese earth is fertile and the abounding waters teem with fish. Hence a rice and vegetable diet mixed up in many forms with fish has always been the usual table fare of the country. The Buddhist faith forbids the killing of animals and so exceptionally few of the people are meat eaters. They like hot stuff—rice and fish and other dishes served with sauces that would scorch an average palate. The fish is served either fried in peanut oil or made into a paste for flavoring the rice.

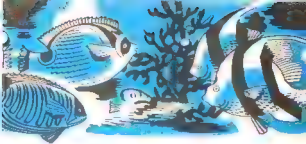
This paste—called ngapi—is made of rotted, dried fish, and it has such universal use that most of the freight boats have the characteristic and unpleasant smell of

baled ngapi. They say that the taste is much better than the smell and that non-Burmans may even acquire the same affection for ngapi as for ripe limburger cheese.

Burmans are generous and like to share their food—when they have it. As much a fixture as is white bread on an American table are the rice flour cakes which are baked in small ovens in the earth, and are usually offered to every visitor in a Burmese home. The guest at a Burmese meal can relax. He is not embarrassed by strange customs and handcuffed by weird tabus. Good table manners there as in the United States can be epitomized in a few words: "Receive naturally and praise warmly." Long accustomed to gracious living and to abundant food, the Burmans have more recently been badly undernourished because of Japanese levies upon their food supply.

Peoples thus treated cannot return quickly to their traditionally hospitable ways. Hunger is the great modifier of national habits. Therefore the American soldier will not expect that the Burmans will voluntarily share their food with him, nor should he compete with them unnecessarily for their slender stores of merchandise.

It is part of our job to help them make their comeback. We can do that by helping them to conserve their food rather than by taking it from them. To do otherwise would be pillage, putting us on the same level with the enemy.



There are few offenses which can be committed by a soldier that the military authority regards more gravely than the plundering of the fields, orchards, or other food stores of a friendly country.

Give the Burmans this additional consideration: Never boast to them about the abundance or the quality of your own food. If a man is hungry, he is in no temper for such conversation. If he is well fed, he is not likely to be interested. If he is neither one nor the other, it is still bad manners.

### THE WAY OF THE BURMESE

THESE people were once passionately fond of sport. They liked canoe races, bullock races, and pony races. They boasted a national ball game called "chinlon" which was played by a small group of men trying to keep a light, plaited caneball in the air for as long as possible—heeling it, elbowing it, kneeling it, kicking it, or catching it with

the head, but never handling it. The game required great skill and prolonged practice. The Burmese also went in for clandestine cock-fighting—a taste many of our country boys will wholly understand—and they bred an excellent strain of game rooster.

They are small people, not bruisers, and like most eastern folk, they fiercely resent being manhandled. Being gentle by nature, they deserve gentle treatment at your hands. Yet the feeling for sport is so instinctive in them that they supported a kind of boxing played with bare fists, but wherein most of the movements were akin to dance steps, with victory going to the man who drew first blood.

Whether such recreation has temporarily disappeared from the national life because of the hardships imposed by the Japanese, certainly it will thrive again through decent treatment and encouragement, and with the beginning of the return to a normal kind of living.

Sport invariably influences the deeper current of a national character, and it has done so with these unassuming people "somewhere east of Suez" with whom your lot is to be cast during the period immediately ahead. They have the directness which we sometimes think in our conceit is strictly a trait of western civilization.

In their shops and markets, they do not like to haggle or bargain as much as the average Oriental. They will size

up and name their price usually, and the choice is then yours—take it or leave it. They charge high prices, but their merchandise is of good quality—when they have it. It is well to know that the Japanese have cleaned out the bazaars. The country is now certain to be cluttered with Japanese-made goods, a point to be remembered in case you have enough time away from duty to hunt for souvenirs. Nearly all soldiers do it, and for that reason, nearly all merchants regard them as good prospects for a gold brick and a furlined messkit.

Either at trade or when visited in their homes, the Burmans deal simply and with a lack of formality which Americans welcome. Shaking hands isn't the general practice, though some Burmans with a western education are as ready to exchange handclasps as any American.

When calling, it is proper for the guest to ask for the head of the house, but again it is pleasant to remark that the slight social error in Burma will not provoke great wrath or dire retribution. The home atmosphere is one of general kindness, and it is said that no children in the world are better treated by their parents than the children in Burma. One way to a Burman's heart is to speak with appreciation of his children; another way is to match him in his respect for elderly people.



They set an example of cleanliness that is all too rare among peoples of the world and should turn many an American face red. Every day is Saturday night for the average Burman, and either the village well or his back veranda will serve as a place for the daily bath. Also, they have the same habits of modesty regarding exposing the body, and of privacy in going to the rear that is supposed to obtain in the best of our western civilization. You won't have to worry about Burmans committing a nuisance on your post.

What else is there to be said of their folk ways? Only that some critics complain that the Burmans think it polite to tell you what you want to hear. If you ask, "Am I on the right road?" they smile and say, "Yes," no matter if it is the wrong road. A most enlightening point. However, there are people scattered from Maine to California whose minds work in this same delightful though puzzling fashion. They are not Burmans. In fact, they have never been to Burma.



## THE WAY OF A SOLDIER

THE one prime and lasting advantage in seeing the country as a soldier, as every old soldier will tell you. Only a soldier gets to the heart of the matter. A country is judged only in the character of its people and an average sightseer moves much too fast for reflection. But the soldier, on the other hand, must seek knowledge of the people first as a matter of professional duty, because the exactness of his information about them is the key to going along with the country.

It is from seeing the people under varying conditions of work, recreation, discipline, danger, and excitement that you will learn those things about Burma which will be of use to you later in life.

They occupy the foreground of your experience in Burma, and so your guide has pointed first to them. Behind them is the land itself, enriched by a romantic variety, beautiful in its varied landscape of rugged mountains, great river valleys, fertile coastal plains, and dense forests, and ornamented by man with the kind of architecture which will win delighted "ahs" and "ohs" from any group of tourists.

The cities of Burma, about which we have said little and which we will say no more since you will discover them for yourself, are as pleasant to the eye when the land is at

peace as are any cities in the world. But it is not alone in Rangoon, Mandalay, or Moulmein that one finds rare beauty in the things men have built. Go to the small towns, meet the people and view their handiwork! We in America love our villages, if they happen to be home, but when it comes to eye appeal, we don't do very well by them. The Burmans do better. They like to place their towns on high hills and to situate their picturesque pagodas at the most prominent spot thereon. Neat people, they do even the big things neatly.

From learning the WHAT and the WHERE of Burma's people at present you can turn to the WHY and HOW of their past. At the present time you are making history and you haven't much time for the study of it. But the value of every souvenir you collect in Burma will be enhanced later on by what you remember of the country from which it came, and when you go sightseeing, as you are expected to do when duty permits, the experience will be twice worth while if you understand what you see. The guide therefore includes just enough about history to give you a few reference points.

In ancient times various Mongolian tribes migrated out of Tibet and Western China searching, as men of ancient times invariably sought, for a better country. They found it in what is now called Burma. It was a country with little

no true grassland but covered quite generally with amazing forests—great tangles of bamboo, vast stands of oak, one of the most highly-prized woods known to man, and in the uplands, such familiar species (to ourselves) as pine, spruce, oak, and rhododendron. It was well-populated forest, its denizens including many species of monkey, elephants, the rhinoceros, tigers, leopards, the smallarking deer, the hog deer, many kinds of tropical birds, including the parrot, and an interesting assortment of snakes, including the python.

These creatures still inhabit the Burma forests. Soldiers may hunt the larger animals, though a license is required, and most of the big game is protected by a "closed" season. As for parrots, never shoot them! Snare them, and then teach them to sing "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition."

Negroid tribes were there when the Mongol people arrived. They were killed or driven out to the last man, and the remnant now survives in the Andaman Islands. Settling on the land, the Mongolian tribes began to destroy the forests to make space for crops, and when the land became poor because of improper cultivation, they destroyed more forest and took up new land. It was in this way that a considerable area of Burma became denuded.

Buddhism became the integrating and moving force in

the life of Burma at just about the beginning of the Christian era. Looking back over those 2,000 years, the Burmans have some right to claim that they have had perhaps the most continuous orderly existence of any people on earth. What is known of the first millennium, however, is largely legend and fable in which petty chieftains were given a build-up until they became great kings. Recognizable history in Burma starts from about the time that William the Conqueror was downing Harold at the Battle of Hastings. A king named Anawrahta came along and got all the boys together, founding the Pagan dynasty in A. D. 1054. He and his 10 successors were the first real rulers of Burma.

The first Europeans to see Burma were the Portuguese. They didn't try to whip the Burmans; they joined them, the men marrying Burmese women. That was about 100 years before we were staging the Boston Tea Party and getting ready for the Revolution. In the following century the British East India Co. established trading posts in Burma. That was the age of great colonial expansion and the British Empire was growing at a phenomenal rate.

Still, Burma remained free and independent under the exclusive charge of its native kings until well into the nineteenth century. The British having meanwhile come into India, friction between the two countries began to develop along the western border and at last flared into

the first Burmese War in 1824. The terms of the peace gave certain territories to Britain but Burma continued under the rule of its native monarchs. At the same time a British resident was placed at the Burmese court. There was one other small war between the two countries shortly before our own Civil War but without radically affecting the relationship between them. Britain gained a little more territory. The local government grew weaker. The tide had turned. Historians make much of native misrule during this period, citing large-scale atrocities instigated by the kings and a general failure to govern firmly and deal with the needs of the people. However that may be, the end of Burma's political independence came on January 1, 1886, when the British deposed King Thebaw and his Queen, Suppyalat, two sovereigns whose names have been warbled by almost every baritone in America because Kipling put them in a song. Thebaw was quite an intriguer and he had a bad habit of wiping out anyone who got in his hair. At those days the kings wore their hair very long. What finished him, however, was a proclamation calling on his subjects to annihilate the English. A British expeditionary force crossed the frontier and proceeded up the Irrawaddy. In one month the campaign was over.

Of the subsequent period under British rule, one authority remarks: "Perhaps never in the history of any

country has the contrast between its past and its present been so great and so rapid." The conditioning influences of an impartial administration of justice, of improved communications and expanded commerce and the humanizing effect of education and medical relief all contributed to Burma's forward surge. Too, as the Burmans profited by these general advantages, their sense of unity and of nationhood became stronger, and by degrees they progressed in self-government within the framework of the British Empire. Long ago Burmese women with property qualifications were given the vote. Finally, partial autonomy was granted Burma in 1937, the last major milestone in the national history to precede the arrival of the Japanese plague.

The love of liberty which is strong in these people is a feeling which any American soldier will respect and admire. Under British administration they had progressed in the wise use of freedom in much the same way as the Philippines. But when the dike broke in Malaya and the Japanese crossed the Salween, within the passage of one month the Burmans were reduced to a state worse than slavery. That "Hell of a beating" fell heaviest on their sore backs.

What does it all mean? You may well have asked yourself that when you heard for the first time that you were

do duty in Burma. Perhaps the lesson is that in our time, to give other peoples a dream of freedom—simply setting the good example for them—is no longer enough. Ways must be found to help them and to insure that rulers like Japan and Germany are never again given the opportunity to cut them down in the very hour when they are learning to stand erect.

That is our responsibility to ourselves. At the signing of our Declaration of Independence, a great American used words to his fellow countrymen which apply today to all peoples who love freedom above all else. "We must all hang together or assuredly we shall be hanged separately."

### **YOUR HEALTH, SOLDIER!**

To win the respect of such people as the Burmans is an aim worthy of a soldier. There is one way to do it—the simplest way—by acting the part of a soldier. What that entails is well put by Private Hargrove when he comments to other enlisted men "the spirit that gets you when you're on the regimental parade ground with the whole battalion for retreat parade. Every mother's son there wants to look as much the soldier as the Old Man does." And yet, the man who wears his uniform well but doesn't take care of his body is strictly a clothes-horse and not a soldier. The sign of the man who is in tune with his



regiment is that he does not take unnecessary chances with his health. Such a soldier realizes that the illness of only a few men will cut deeply into the efficiency of the whole organization. To him, alertness means, first of all, taking care of his body.

There is therefore no good purpose served by supplying you with a long list of red-light warnings such as: "Don't get bitten by a snake!" or "Don't let mosquitoes use your back for a parade ground!" or "Don't cast an eye on a native woman!" Under a given set of circumstances each of these experiences may prove, let us say, unavoidable.

The common sense thing to do is to consider, should they befall, then what's to be done? The Army of the United States—through your company officers and your medical service—is prepared to give you the answers. That is one of the duties of your superiors. Service in Burma imposes special health conditions and requires a wide knowledge of local conditions.

It is true that Burma—due to the work of the British health service—was at one time remarkably free of many of the tropical diseases which are a problem to our forces elsewhere in the Pacific area. But Burma has been for long in the hands of the enemy. The Japanese would have no scruples against polluting wells or contaminating food stores in such way as to cripple our army. They will turn

weapon within their power against us and any town which they are compelled to withdraw is likely left in such condition that there is well-hidden menace every turn for the American soldier. You need to be on guard.

There is, therefore, this general rule for your guidance: the moment when you set foot in Burma, make a study of health conditions a part of your working program, and when you are in doubt, never hesitate to consult the suggestions of your superiors. An ambition to learn is a sure mark of an alerted soldier and is never lost on a competent officer.

Even if you must take chances with your health, either because duty leads you in that direction, or because of personal needs, take all of the precautions which will reduce risks to a minimum. Prophylaxis was installed by the Government of the United States for the specific purpose of keeping our soldiers out of real trouble. It is indecent only when it is neglected and shameful only to the soldier who thinks he is too smart to have need of it. Venereal diseases are always prevalent in tropical countries. They will be more so in a country whose women have been used by the soldiers of our enemy in any way that they pleased. If you are going to be knocked out of the ring by the Japanese, it would be better to get shot.

## YOUR SPECIAL ORDERS

KIPLING'S British soldier never forgot Burma, and he lived his life through dreaming of the wind in the palm trees and hearing the call of the temple bells. All that has been said in this short guide for American soldiers is by way of suggesting that there is an attitude, which once attained by the American soldier, will not only serve the present military purposes of his country, but will make his service in Burma a monument in his personal life and recollection. The ideas can be summed up for your benefit in words paraphrasing a soldier's ten commandments. Your special orders are:

1. To take charge of your health as never before in your lifetime, realizing the greatness of the ends which your country has in view.
2. To walk in Burma in a military manner, keeping always on the alert and respecting all rules and customs so as not to offend those Burmans who are within sight or hearing.



*Buddhist  
Priest*



To report at once to the nearest medical station if you risked your health in such a way that you may have endangered your personal force.

To repeat all special warnings about health precaution and treatment of the local population to all comrades whose sense of duty may be more distant from the good of the regiment than your own.

To quit Burma only when the distress of that country is properly relieved.

To receive, obey, and pass on to your fellow soldiers the spirit of the undertaking in which you are engaged so that all ranks will be stimulated to follow the line of duty.

To talk to no Burman about your line of duty.

To do those things which will win confidence, and prevent alarm, in case of disorder.

To call upon your superiors for advice and instruction in any situation not covered by instructions.

To salute the courage and the good will of all forces and formations engaged with you and your country in the present undertaking, to measure their worth according to their works and not according to their color and to refrain from judging others by our standards.

The eleventh and final general order is noteworthy. It tells you to be especially watchful at night.

This is a long night—one of the longest in world history. Years have passed since the Axis began to put the lights out, first over Asia, then over Europe, and then all over the earth. Until men can again stand in sunlight, there is no release from especial watchfulness for the American soldier.

This new dawn, too, will “come up like thunder” in Burma, but the thunder will be the echo of American guns. As strange as is your new experience, it is not more difficult or dangerous than is the daily living of millions of other American soldiers, marines, sailors, and merchant seamen serving in other lands and waters the world over.

It is our turn now. We took “one Hell of a beating.” That first bad round was weathered. It is time to give it back.







## BURMA



DEVELOPED BY



### CHECK LIST OF DO'S AND DON'TS

NEVER fool with a water buffalo. That animal is bad medicine and has no respect for the American uniform.

Soldiers are not expected to go around maltreating large trees, but some of the Burmans venerate these objects and so a special warning is required on the point. Treat every Burmese tree as respectfully as if it were a California Sequoia or Redwood.

Take off those issue shoes before entering any Burmese pagoda or other holy place. The Burmans require it. It's like taking off your hat before entering an American church.

Work through the Thugyi, or village headman, when seeking permission to make camp, attend a festival, or take any other action touching Burmese life. The Thugyi is what we would call "the works," and you can't go wrong by treating him with deference.

Never touch anything in pagodas, temples, or shrines. Even their crumbling ruins should not be defiled by removing anything from the premises or writing on the walls.

Try to speak to the Burman in his own language after you have picked up a few phrases, but if he doesn't understand it, don't shout. That doesn't make it any clearer.

Burma is overrun with dogs. The Burmans don't take



good care of them but they are resentful if anyone else mistreats them. The barking of the dogs may disturb your sleep at night. Don't throw a shoe; you will need it.

Should you see Burmans and Indians engaging in a brawl, don't get into it, and be sure to give them elbow room. As is the case back home, the worst things usually happen to the innocent bystander.

Should you attend Burmese festivals and Pwes (theatrical entertainments) keep everything under control and leave the show to the participants. The 3 months from July to October are set aside by the Burmese as Wa, a sort of Lent during which there is supposed to be no courting and marriage, and which is terminated by a great festival of lights called Thadingyut. It is a real jubilee period.

Another such is the Buddhist New Year which comes in April and which is celebrated by Burmans throwing water over one another as we do confetti. It may be less fun but it's easier to clean up on the day after. The Burmese fetes, despite all of the enthusiasm, have a religious significance; therefore the soldier should regard them with restraint.

Before attempting to photograph any citizen of any country, it is best to approach him respectfully and ask his permission. By so doing, you will usually win his cooperation.

## MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

### Currency

THE currency used in Burma is the same as that in India:

1 rupee = 16 annas

1 anna = 12 pie or 4 pice

The rupee is a silver coin worth about 30 cents in American money. The anna, pie, and pice are all bronze coins having approximate values of 2 cents,  $\frac{1}{8}$  cent, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cent in American money.

The Japanese have probably introduced some of their own money, but the paper put out by the Axis occupation forces is likely to be worthless.

### Weights and Measures

1 lan (4 toun) = 88 inches

1 tain = 1,069 yards (slightly over  $\frac{6}{10}$  of a mile)

1 dain (4 tain) = 2.43 miles

1 sah = 1 gallon

1 viss or paiktha = 3.6 pounds

### Telling Time

The same calendar as ours is used, or at least widely known, in Burma.

The difference in standard time between New York and

Burma is 12½ hours, and the date, because Burma is west of the International Date Line, is one day ahead of New York. At high noon Sunday in New York, therefore, it is 12:30 a. m. Monday in Burma; and at 8:30 Sunday morning in Rangoon, it is just 8 o'clock Saturday evening on Broadway.

### **Sanitary Conditions**

Tropical diseases are present in Burma, but you can avoid them by following a few simple health rules. The three most common "fever" diseases are malaria, dengue (pronounced "deng-gay"), and a sandfly fever. The first two are spread by certain species of mosquitoes, the last by a tiny sandfly. The surest way to avoid these diseases is to keep from being bitten. Sleep under a mosquito net and keep your arms and legs covered at dusk.

Two other diseases, relapsing fever and typhus, are spread by lice. Give yourself a frequent once-over to get rid of any such visitors. Fleas can spread bubonic plague by biting diseased rats and then biting humans. The plague flea cannot survive sunlight.

Food and water are often contaminated with cholera or dysentery. Diarrhea is the main symptom of both diseases. Do not eat raw fruits or vegetables unless they have been peeled or washed in disinfectant. Drink only boiled or chemically purified water, unless your sanitary officer

okays the water supply. Tea is a refreshing beverage in hot weather, but make sure that only pure water is added in cooling it.

A common disease of the eye, called trachoma, is spread by contact. It can be picked up by using the towel of an infected person.

### HINTS ON PRONOUNCING BURMESE

There is nothing very difficult about Burmese, except that you won't be able to read the signs and newspapers you will see. That is because the Burmese use a very different alphabet from ours. Therefore, the instructions and vocabulary below are not given in Burmese writing, but in a simplified system of representing the language as it *sounds*. However, no system of writing can give you the exact sound of a language unless you use your ears as well as your eyes. Listen carefully to the natives you meet. Imitate their pronunciation as closely as you can, using the written form as a guide.

Just as in English, there are certain minor differences in the way Burmese is pronounced in different parts of Burma. The principal differences are that lower Burmese has *n*'s at the end of words where upper Burmese pronounces vowels through the nose, and lower Burmese has *r*'s where upper Burmese has the "throat catch." Either way of pronouncing

the words will be understood anywhere in Burma. The best thing to do is to speak like the people of the region in which you find yourself, both in regard to the points mentioned here and any others you happen to notice.

Here are a few simple points to help you:

1. *Use of the pitch of the voice.* In Burmese, every word has its own pitch or tone and every time you say the word you have to give it its proper tone. You should try to memorize each word exactly as you hear it. If you think of each word as a short melody, it will prove quite easy to do this.

In English we are in the habit of dropping the voice at the end of a sentence. On some Burmese words the voice drops slowly, on some it drops sharply, on some it rises as though you were asking a question. So avoid your ordinary tendency to drop the voice every time and make it rise or fall as you hear the words from natives.

To give you the idea of the tone and rhythm that goes with each syllable, we have used capitals and small letters—capital letters to show where the voice is high and small letters to show where it is low.

(a) When a part of a word is heavily accented at the beginning, and the voice falls slowly, the vowel is written twice, once with capital letters and once with small letters, with a curved line connecting the two parts. Examples:

THŌ\_ō—meaning "three".

LAY\_ay—meaning "four".

NGA\_a—meaning "five".

KO\_o—meaning "nine".

(b) Many words are pronounced in a low tone of voice then rising in pitch as though you were asking a question in a gentle way. Notice that it is generally fairly long: the vowel is written twice in small letters with a curved line connecting the two parts of the syllable. Examples:

ta-ya\_a—meaning "a hundred".

ta-tha\_ōō—meaning "a thousand".

yay\_ay—meaning "water".

(c) Many words are very short and sharply spoken and end abruptly by a sound called a "throat catch". They are written in capital letters with an apostrophe at the end. In lower Burma these same words generally are pronounced with a *t* or *k* at the end. Examples:

TEE'—meaning "one".

HNEE'—meaning "two".

SHEE'—meaning "eight".

(d) Other words are pronounced with a quick falling tone ending in a "throat catch" but not as short and abruptly stopped as the preceding examples.

In these words, the vowels are written double, once in capitals and once in small letters, but without any curved

line between them, and with an apostrophe at the end.  
Examples:

MAa' word of address to a woman your own age.

HO' KEc' meaning "yes".

(e) Unaccented short syllables are written in small letters and with only one writing of the vowel. Examples are the first syllables of the word for "thousand" and the word for "hundred", already mentioned. (ta-rha\_ñō, ta-ya\_a)

2. *Vowels*. Here are the values of the Burmese vowels, as we have written them:

A	or	a	equals	the <i>a</i> in <i>father</i> . Example: ta_a meaning "this". In an unaccented short syllable, it sounds almost like <i>u</i> in <i>but</i> . Example: ta-SAY' meaning "please".
AW	or	aw	equals	the <i>aw</i> in <i>law</i> . Example: chñ DAW_aw meaning "I".
AY	or	ay	equals	the <i>ay</i> of <i>day</i> . Example: yay_ay meaning "water".
E	or	e	equals	the <i>e</i> of <i>pet</i> or the <i>eh</i> of <i>yeh</i> . Sometimes it may sound a little like the <i>a</i> of <i>cat</i> . Example: TWE' meaning "start out".
EE	or	ee	equals	the <i>ee</i> of <i>feet</i> . When very short, sounds almost like <i>i</i> of <i>bit</i> . Examples: MEE_ee ya-THA_a meaning "railroad", TEE' meaning "one".
O	or	o	equals	the <i>o</i> of <i>go</i> . Example: KO_o meaning "nine".
OO	or	oo	equals	the <i>oo</i> of <i>food</i> . Example: ma-HO' PHOO_oo meaning "no".

3. *Vowels pronounced through the nose.* This type of vowel is used in Upper Burma, but in Lower Burma the same words are pronounced with *n* or *ng* after the vowel. If you hold your nose and say "ma-a-a", you will get a good idea of how a vowel pronounced through the nose sounds. English-speaking people frequently make this kind of sound when saying *bub* for "what did you say?", *ub-bub* for "yes" and *ub-ub* for "no". We will show all the vowels that are pronounced through the nose by writing a little wavy line over them, like this (◡). *Be sure to pronounce every vowel through the nose that has the little wavy line over it.*

4. *The throat-catch.* We have already spoken of the "throat catch", a sound like a catch in the throat or a slight cough, which we show with an apostrophe. English-speaking people generally use the throat catch in the middle of the expression *ub-ub* for "no", and also at the end of *yeb* and *no* when they are cut off short.

5. *Consonants.* Most Burmese consonants are like English consonants, and we use the letters in the ordinary English values. However, there are a few special points to notice.

Burmese has two kinds of *p*, two kinds of *t*, two kinds of *k*, two kinds of *ch*. The first is strong and is followed by a puff of breath, like the sound of *h*; we write this *ph*, *th*, *kh*, *chh*. The other kind is weak, and sometimes sounds to



our ears almost like *b d g j*; we write this type as *p t k ch* without the added *b*. The first type is the one which sounds most like our *p t k ch*, because our sounds generally have a bit of an *b* with them. Hold your hand about an inch in front of your mouth and say *hint*, then *tint*, then *stint*. You will feel the breath come out in the pronunciation of the *b* of *hint*. You will feel an even stronger rush of breath with *t* of *tint*. But you get no breath or h-sound with the "t" of *stint*. That is because we pronounce the *t*, and also *p k ch*, with a puff of breath when it comes at the beginning of a word but not when it follows an *t*. Now listen to the words *thaw-aw BA'*, meaning "butter", and *a-TOo'* meaning "salad". Notice that both *th* in *thaw-aw BA'* and *t* in *a-TOo'* are *t*-sounds, but the first has a puff of breath with it (like *t* of English *take*) while the second has no puff of breath (like *t* of *stake*). Try to imitate these two types of *t*.

Whatever you do, don't let the writing of *th* and *ph* fool you into pronouncing the sounds of *think* and *Philip*. The sound of *think* is represented in our Burmese words with *th̄* (with a line over the two letters). The *f* sound, sometimes written *ph* in English, is not found in Burmese.

Another point you may notice in Burmese is that *ph* and *p* are sometimes changed into *b* when the word comes in the middle of a sentence, in the same way *th̄* and *t* may change into *d*, *kh* and *k* may change into *g*, *ch*, and *chh* may

into *j*, *īb* may change into *āb* (the sound of *ib* in *then*), *i* may change into *z*.

Letters *bn bm bl* represent *n m l* combined with an *b*. Letters *ng* represent the sound in English *sing*, but, while *ng* is made only in the middle and at the end of words in English, it is also found at the beginning of words in Chinese. The little curve ( \_ ) is used between letters to show that the sounds are pronounced together without separation; it is used between vowels as explained above and between consonants as you will notice in many examples.

Examples of the different kinds of sounds we have men-

*ṣ kb cbb* like English *p t k cb*, but stronger:

*ṣ' PHOO\_oo*—meaning "no".

*v\_aw BA'*—meaning "butter".

*a-HNEE'*—meaning "seven".

*ḥAoo'*—meaning "six".

*ṣ t k cb*, like English *p t k cb* minus the puff of breath that goes with the English sounds when they come at the beginning of a word:

*ṣō Mōṣ'*—meaning "bread".

*ṣ'*—meaning "start out".

*ṣo*—meaning "nine".

*DAW\_aw*—meaning "I".

$\bar{t}b$  like *tb* in *think*,  $\bar{d}b$  like *tb* in *they*:

THEE'  $\bar{T}HEE_{ee}$ —meaning "fruit".

a-ME<sub>e</sub>  $\bar{D}HA_{a}$ —meaning "meat".

$ng$  as in English *sing*, but found at the beginning of words:

NGA<sub>a</sub>—meaning "fish" or "five".

*bn* *bl* like English *n* *l* but, with an *b*-sound:

HNAY<sub>ay</sub>-HNAY<sub>ay</sub> P<sub>aw</sub> YAW<sub>aw</sub> ba<sub>a</sub>—"speak slowly".

o<sub>ya</sub><sub>a</sub> BE' HLEe' ba<sub>a</sub>—meaning "turn right".



## LIST OF MOST USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES

HERE is a list of the most useful words and phrases you will need in Burma  
*You should learn these by heart.*

### Greetings and General Phrases

<i>English</i>	<i>Simplified Burmese Spelling</i>
How are you— or How do you do?	ma_g YE_g LA_g
Word of address to a—	
man older than yourself	ŋŋ_go
woman older than yourself	daw_gw
man your own age	ko_g
woman your own age	MAA'
member of the clergy	ko_g daw_gw
Please	ta-SAY'
Excuse me	ka TAWaw' ba_g YEE
Thank you	CHAY_g ZOO_go ɪɛ' de_g
Yes	HO KE'
No	ma-HO' PHOO_go
Understand me?	NA_g ɪɛ' YE_g LA_g
I don't understand	NA_g ma-ɪɛ' BOO_go
Speak slowly	HNAY_g-HNAY_g P.YAW_gw ba_g

### Location

Where is	pe_g ma_g ɪɛ_g
restaurant or tea shop	lu-PHE' ya_g gy sa_gɛ

### English

### Simplified Burmese Spelling

Where is the restaurant?

la-PHE' ya ya sa se be ma LE

hotel

hau aw-te

Where is the hotel?

hau aw-te be ma LE

railroad

MEE se ya-THA

station

boo go da ya

Where is the railroad

MEE se ya-THA boo go da ya se be

station?

ma LE

toilet

ai ai-dha

Where is the toilet?

ai ai-dha be ma LE

### Directions

Turn right

na BE' HLE' ba

Turn left

pe BE' HLE' ba

Go straight ahead

TE' DE' THWA

Please point

tu-SAY' PYA' ba

Mile

ma

### Numbers

One

TEE'

Two

HNEE'

Three

THO

Four

LAY

Five

NGA

Six

CHHAo'

Seven

khwa-HNEE'

Eight

SHEE'

*English**Simplified Burmese Spelling*

Nine	KO၂
Ten	te၂
Eleven	SEe' TEE'
Twelve	SEe' HNEE'

"Thirteen", "fourteen" and so on, are simply the word for "ten", followed by the words for "three", "four" and so on.

Twenty	hna-se၂
Twenty-one	hna-SEe' TEE'

"Twenty-two", "twenty-three" and so on, are simply the word for "twenty", plus the words for "two", "three", and so on.

Thirty	THÖ ၊ te၂
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"Forty", "fifty" and so on, are simply the words for "four", "five" and so on, followed by the word for "ten".

Hundred	ta၂a၂
Thousand	ta၂ha ၊

**Designation**

What is	pa၂ LE၂
this	ta၂
What is this?	ta၂ ba၂ LE၂
I	chö DAW၂aw
want	lo၂o ၊
cigarettes	"cigarette"
I want cigarettes	chö daw၂aw "cigarette" lo၂o ၊ de၂
water	ya၂ya၂
I want water	chö daw၂aw ya၂ya၂ lo၂o ၊ de၂

# **Foods, etc.**

<i>English</i>	<i>Simplified Burmese Spelling</i>
read	pa gō MŌo'
utter	shaw gw BA'
fruit	THEE' THEE' ee
egg (hen's egg)	CHE' O'Oo'
soup	HĒ' j̄ jo g
fish	NGA g
leat	a-ME' e DHA g
ork	WE' THA g
fusion	SAY' THA g
otatoes	a g LOO go
ooked Rice	sha-MĒ' j̄
vegetables	HĒE' j̄ DHEE' j̄ HĒE' j̄ Y WE'
alad	a-TŌo'
milk (cow's milk)	no g NOo'
sugar	tha-ſA g
salt	SA g
ranges	lay j̄ māw gw DHEE' ee
emons	thā j̄ ba-ya g DHEE' ee
m Cream	yay ay-GE' e MŌo'
tea	la-PHEe' yay ay
offee	ka g-phce' ee
beer	bee' ee-ya g
match	MEE' ee-JEE'



## Money

### English

### Simplified Burmese Spelling

How much is it?

pẽ̃ L100' LẼ̃

The answer will be given you in P\_YA\_a, PẼ̃, and CHAa'.

Four P\_YA\_a equal a PẼ̃, sixteen PẼ̃ equal a CHAa'. About three CHAa' equal one dollar.

P\_YA\_a

PẼ̃

CHAa'

## Time

To find out what time it is you say really, "How many hours strike already", and add LẼ̃, the word to show you've asked a question.

How many

pẽ̃ HNAa'

hours

nã̃ g-yẽ̃ ge

strike already

THÕ̃ g beẽ̃ ge LẼ̃

What time is it?

pẽ̃ HNAa' nã̃ a-yẽ̃ ge THÕ̃ g beẽ̃ ge LẼ̃

"One o'clock" is "one hour".

One o'clock

ta-nã̃ g-yẽ̃ ge

"Ten past one" is "one o'clock ten minutes".

Ten past one

ta-nã̃ g-yẽ̃ ge sẽ̃ ge ma-NEE'

"Quarter past five" is "five hours fifteen minutes".

Quarter past five

NGÃ̃ g nã̃ g-yẽ̃ ge SẼ̃ ge NGÃ̃ a ma-NEE'

"Twenty past seven" is "seven hours, minutes twenty".

Twenty past seven

khwa-hna-nã̃ g-yẽ̃ ge mee-NEE' na-sẽ̃ ge

*English**Simplified Burmese Spelling*

"Half past six" is "six hours half".

Half past six

CHH<sub>1</sub>loo' na g-ye<sub>2</sub> ge GWE<sub>3</sub>

"Twenty of eight" is "seven hours forty minutes".

Twenty of eight

khwa-hna-na g-ye<sub>2</sub> ge mee-NEE' LAY<sub>1</sub> py se e

"Quarter of nine" is "nine hours quarter less".

Quarter of nine

KO<sub>1</sub> ð na g-ye<sub>2</sub> ge MA' TEE<sub>3</sub> ge

"Ten to three" is "three hours ten minutes less".

Ten to three

THO<sub>1</sub> o na g-ye<sub>2</sub> ge se<sub>3</sub> ge ma-NEE' TEE<sub>3</sub> ð

If you want to know when a movie starts, you say really "movies when show" and add *ma-le* which means you're asking a question about something in the future.

Movies

YO' shē<sub>3</sub>

when

pe<sub>3</sub> DAW<sub>1</sub>aw'

show

PYA<sub>1</sub>ad'

When does the movie start? YO' shē<sub>3</sub> pe<sub>3</sub> DAW<sub>1</sub>aw' PYA<sub>1</sub>ad' ma-le<sub>3</sub>

For "What times does the train leave", you say really "train when start out", and then add *ma-le*.

Train

MEE<sub>3</sub> ge ya-THA<sub>1</sub> o

when

pe<sub>3</sub> DAW<sub>1</sub>aw

start out

TWE'

When does the train leave? MEE<sub>3</sub> ge ya-THA<sub>1</sub> o pe<sub>3</sub> DAW<sub>1</sub>aw TWE' ma-le<sub>3</sub>

Yesterday

ma-NAYay'

Today

ka-NAYay'

Tomorrow

NE' ph<sub>1</sub>yā<sub>3</sub>g

## Days of the Week

### English

### Simplified Burmese Spelling

Sunday	ta-NẼ ʃ ka-n way gy
Monday	ta-NẼ ʃ la p
Tuesday	ʃ ʃ ga p
Wednesday	BO'-da-HOO go
Thursday	cha g dha p ba-DAY a)
Friday	THAo' ja g
Saturday	sa-nay gy

## Useful Phrases

What is your name?	khē ʃ BYA μ na a-me ʃ ba-dhoo go LE ʃ
My name is John	cha-DAW aw na μ-mee ʃ ʃ AW μ
How do you say "table" in Burmese?	"Table" go o ba-ma a lo o ba a khaw aw dha-LE ʃ
I want to eat	chō duw aw SA a jē ʃ de ʃ
Goodbye (by person leaving)	THWA a DAWaw' me ʃ
Goodbye (by person replying)	THWA a DAWaw' naw aw

## ADDITIONAL WORDS AND PHRASES

### Natural Objects

bank (of river)	KA μ
darkness	hma oon JEE μ
light	a-LEE μ
desert	THE ʃ ga n da a Y Ao'

*English**Simplified Burmese Spelling*

field (general word for "open space", "meadow")	l <u>wee</u> m-b yee <u>n</u>
field (cultivated field)	le <u>e</u>
orchard or garden	chha <u>n</u>
fire	MEE <u>ee</u>
forest, woods or jungle	TAW <u>au</u>
grass	M YET
the ground	m_yay ay JEE <u>ee</u>
gully (ravine)	M YA <u>oon</u> or CHA <u>oon</u>
hill or mountain	ta <u>oon</u>
ice	yay ay-GE <u>e</u>
lake	a <u>een</u>
pond	ka <u>n</u>
the moon	LAo'
the ocean	thā-MOT day <u>a</u>
sea	pee <u>n</u> le <u>e</u>
rain	MO <u>o</u> yo <u>a</u>
river	M YEET
snow	HNEE <u>n</u>
spring (water-hole, etc.)	SA <u>n</u> BAoot
stars	che <u>e</u>
stream	SA <u>n</u> JA <u>oon</u>
the sun	may <u>ay</u>
swamp	NO <u>n</u>
wind	lay <u>ay</u>

## Time

### English

### Simplified Burmese Spelling

day	NAY <sub>ay</sub> '
day after tomorrow	tha-BEE' kha <sub>u</sub>
day before yesterday	ta <sub>n</sub> ma <sub>ya</sub> ma-N <sub>ay</sub> '
evening	N <sub>Y</sub> Aa' nay <sub>ay</sub>
month	LAa'
night	N <sub>Y</sub> Aa'
week	ta-NEE' n ga-no <sub>e</sub> ta-BAT
year	HNEET
January	ZA <sub>u</sub> n yoo-wa-ree LAa'
February	pha <sub>y</sub> -pha-wa-ree LAa'
March	MAT
April	ay <sub>ay</sub> p <sub>yee</sub> ee
May	ma <sub>y</sub> ay LAa'
June	zoo <sub>n</sub> LAa'
July	zoo <sub>oo</sub> -la <sub>ee</sub> LAa'
August	aw <sub>aw</sub> -GOT LAa'
September	SET-tem-ba <sub>a</sub> LAa'
October	Aoot-to <sub>o</sub> -ba <sub>a</sub> LAa'
November	no <sub>o</sub> -wem-ba <sub>a</sub> LAa'
December	dee <sub>ee</sub> -zem-ba <sub>a</sub> LAa'

## Relationships

boy	thoo <sub>oo</sub> -nge <sub>e</sub> -G <sub>LAY</sub> ay
elder brother	a-ka <sub>o</sub>
younger brother	n <sub>yee</sub> ee

*English**Simplified Burmese Spelling*

child	<i>kha-LAY<sub>ay</sub></i>
daughter	<i>tha-MEE<sub>ee</sub></i>
father	<i>a-phay<sub>ay</sub></i>
girl	<i>MAY<sub>n</sub> K<sub>LAY<sub>ay</sub></sub></i>
husband	<i>lee<sub>n</sub></i>
person	<i>loo<sub>oo</sub></i>
man	<i>YAoo' CHA<sub>a</sub></i>
mother	<i>a-may<sub>ay</sub></i>
relatives	<i>sway<sub>ay</sub> M<sub>YO<sub>o</sub></sub></i>
elder sister	<i>a-MAa'</i>
younger sister	<i>n<sub>yee</sub> ee-MAa'</i>
son	<i>THA<sub>a</sub></i>
wife	<i>ma-YA<sub>a</sub></i>
woman	<i>MAY<sub>ay</sub> MAa'</i>

**Human Body**

arm	<i>LET MA<sub>oon</sub></i>
back	<i>CHAW<sub>aw</sub></i>
body	<i>ka<sub>o</sub></i>
ear	<i>NA<sub>a</sub></i>
eye	<i>M<sub>YEe'</sub></i>
finger	<i>LET CHHA<sub>oon</sub></i>
foot or sole	<i>chhay<sub>ay</sub> BO<sub>a</sub></i>
hair	<i>sa-bee<sub>n</sub></i>
hand	<i>LET</i>
head	<i>GA<sub>oon</sub></i>

*English**Simplified Burmese Spelling*

lower leg	chhay_ay DAA'
thigh	pa_oon
mouth	ba-ZAT
neck	le_e-BEE_n
nose	na-KHA_oon
teeth	THO_u
me	chhay_g) B_YA_u

**House and Furniture**

bath-room	ya_u) CHO_o-GA_n
bed	Aya)'_ya_u)
blanket	sa_oon
chair	ka-da-tha_gen
cup	KHWET
door	sa-GA_u
house	ay_u)
kitchen	MEE_ee-bo_o GA_u)
stairs or ladder	hlay_ay GA_n
mosquito net	chee_u da_oon
room	a-KHA_u)
stove (cooking place)	MEE_ee-bo_u)
table	sa-BWE_e
wall	tha-ya_u)
water for bathing	CHHO_u ya_u)
water for washing	SAY_ay ya_u)
window	ka-DWEE_m-BAA_oo'



## Food and Drink—Tobacco

<i>English</i>	<i>Simplified Burmese Spelling</i>
bananas	nga-PYAW <sub>aw</sub> DHEE <sub>ee</sub>
fruit	THEET-THEE <sub>ee</sub> or a-THEE <sub>ee</sub>
beans	PE <sub>ee</sub>
cucumbers	tha-KHW <sub>ah</sub> DHEE <sub>ee</sub>
sour milk	day <sub>ee</sub> jee <sub>ee</sub>
food	a-ra <sub>ah</sub>
grapes	tha-B YEE'-THEE <sub>ee</sub>
lemons	tha-m-b ya <sub>ah</sub> DHEE <sub>ee</sub>
milk	NOO'
orange juice	lay <sub>ee</sub> ma <sub>aw</sub> ya <sub>aw</sub> ya <sub>aw</sub>
pipe	SAY <sub>ay</sub> da <sub>ah</sub>
potatoes	a <sub>ah</sub> LOO <sub>oo</sub>
rice (cooked)	tha-MEE <sub>ee</sub>
rice (raw grains)	sa <sub>ah</sub>
salad	LET-THOT or a-TOO'
sugar	tha-I <sub>ah</sub>
tobacco	SAY <sub>ay</sub>
tomatoes	kha-Y <sub>ah</sub> jee <sub>ee</sub> DHEE <sub>ee</sub>
turnip	ma <sub>ah</sub> la <sub>ah</sub> OO <sub>oo</sub>

## Surroundings

bridge	ta-DA <sub>ah</sub>
church	pa-ya <sub>ah</sub> SHEET KHO <sub>ah</sub> I <sub>ah</sub> oon
city or town	M YOO'
market	ZAY <sub>ay</sub>



*English**Simplified Burmese Spelling*

mosque	pa-lee <sub>ee</sub>
path, trail, pass	LA <sub>n</sub>   A <sub>oon</sub>
post office	sa <sub>a</sub> DAee'
police station	GAT
road or street	LA <sub>n</sub>
store	sa <sub>eeh</sub>
village	yo <sub>a</sub>
well	ya <sub>y</sub> ya <sub>y</sub> DWEE <sub>n</sub>

**Animals**

animal	sa-RAYT-sa <sub>n</sub>
bird	HNGET
water buffalo	CHOO <sub>s</sub>
cat	cha <sub>oon</sub>
chicken (hen)	CHET
cow	N WA <sub>a</sub> -MAa'
crocodile	MEEee'   A <sub>oon</sub>
dog	KHWAY <sub>ay</sub>
mule	LA <sub>s</sub>
donkey	M YE <sub>s</sub>
duck	WA <sub>n</sub> -BE <sub>e</sub>
goat	SAYT
horse	M YEE <sub>n</sub>
house lizard	TA <sub>oo</sub> TEe'
leech	CHAWaw'
ox	N WA <sub>a</sub> -DEE <sub>ee</sub>
pig	WET

*English**Simplified Burmese Spelling*

rabbit

ya ng

rat

CHOOet

snake

m<sub>way</sub> ay

scorpion

KAY<sub>n</sub> MEE<sub>ee</sub> GAoo'**Insects**

ants

P<sub>YOO</sub>et SAYT

bedbugs

cha-BO<sub>o</sub>

flies

ye<sub>n-ga</sub> oon

fleas or lice

KHWAY<sub>ay</sub>-DHA<sub>n</sub>

lice

THA<sub>n</sub>

mosquitoes

chhee<sub>n</sub>

spider

YEE<sub>n'</sub>-goo<sub>oo</sub>**Trades and Occupations**

barber

SAT<sub>sa</sub> g d<sub>he</sub> g

blacksmith

pa-be<sub>g</sub> sa-ya<sub>g</sub>

butcher

a-ME<sub>g</sub> THAT tha-MA<sub>g</sub>

cook

tha-MEE<sub>n</sub> CHET-thoo<sub>oo</sub>

doctor

sa-ya<sub>g</sub> woo<sub>n</sub>

farmer

le<sub>g</sub> dha-MA<sub>g</sub>

laundryman

kha-wa<sub>g</sub> d<sub>he</sub> g

mechanic

LET LOT thoo<sub>oo</sub>

policeman

p<sub>ya</sub> a-ta<sub>g</sub>

servant

choo<sub>n</sub>

shoemaker

pha-NAT-CHOT thoo<sub>oo</sub>

tailor

AT-CHOT tha-MA<sub>g</sub>

## Clothing

### English

### Simplified Burmese Spelling

belt	kha-BAT
jacket	AY n-je-ge
rain coat	MO o ga n AY n-je-ge
hat	OT THOT
shirt	SHAT AY n-je-ge
shorts (outer)	BA gon bee-ge to o
shoes	pha-NAT
socks	i hha, g) ZOOT
sweater	swe-ge to o AY n-je-ge
trousers	BA gon bee-ge
undershirt	CHH JVAY ga n AY n-je-ge

## Adjectives

bad	SQ o
good	KA gon
big	CHEE-ge
small	nge-ge
sick	PYA o
well	KA gon
hungry	SA o
thirsty	ya, gy NGAT
black	ME-ge
white	ph-ya o o
blue	ge ya o
red	nee-ge

*English**Simplified Burmese Spelling*

green	SAY <sub>n</sub>
yellow	wa <sub>g</sub>
high or tall	MYEEn'
low	NAYn'
long	shay <sub>ay</sub>
short	tu <sub>ay</sub>
deep	NET
shallow	tu <sub>y</sub> <sub>n</sub>
cold	AY <sub>ay</sub>
hot	poa <sub>go</sub>
dry	CHHAoos
wet	so <sub>g</sub>
cheap	paw <sub>aw</sub> or ZAY <sub>ay</sub> paw <sub>aw</sub>
expensive	ZAY <sub>ay</sub> CHEE <sub>se</sub> or SHA <sub>g</sub>
empty	HA <sub>gon</sub> LA <sub>gon</sub>
full	PYAYay'
heavy	LAY <sub>ay</sub>
light	PAWaw'
clean	see <sub>n</sub> che <sub>se</sub> or THAN' SHEE <sub>n</sub>
dirty	NYEET PAT
old (things, not persons)	a-HA <sub>gon</sub>
new	a-THEET
young	nges
old (person—same as "big")	CHEE <sub>se</sub>
contented, happy	e yaw <sub>aw</sub>
other	ta-CHHA <sub>a</sub>

# Pronouns and Other Important Words

## English

## Simplified Burmese Spelling

I	choon daw aw
we	choon daw aw DOo'
you	khee n BYA
he	thoo go
she	thoo go or thoo go-Ma'
this	da g
they	thoo go DOo'
these	da g daw gy
that	ho g
those	ho g ha g daw gy
my or mine	choon daw aw EEe'
our or ours	choon daw aw DOo' EEe'
his, hers, its	thoo go EEe'
your, yours	khee n BYA EEe'
their, theirs	thoo go DOo' EEe'
who?	be g dhoo go
when?	be g DAWaw'
what?	ba g LE g
which?	be g ha g LE g
how?	be g or be g-DHOo'
how many or how much?	be g LAoo' LE g
how far?	ba-LAook WAY gy LE g
anyone	ba-dhoo go ma-to g
somebody	a-CHHOo' dhoo go
everybody	A g LO g

*English**Simplified Burmese Spelling*

above, on top	a-paw <sub>g</sub> aw
again	ta-pha <sub>n</sub>
already	a-THEEn'
also	LE <sub>g</sub> ba <sub>g</sub>
and	HNEEn'
beside	a-p <sub>g</sub> ec <sub>n</sub>
on that side	he <sub>g</sub> BET
on the other side	sa-CHHA <sub>g</sub> BET
on this side	dec <sub>ge</sub> BET
at the left	he <sub>g</sub> BET
at the right	n <sub>g</sub> ya <sub>g</sub> BET
behind	a-NAou'
below	Aou'
but	DH(t'o') ya <sub>g</sub> dwee <sub>g</sub> or DH'Oo' ma-HOT
enough	lo <sub>n</sub> LAou'
far	WAY <sub>gy</sub>
near	a-NEE <sub>ge</sub>
for	PHOo'
from	GAu'
in front	a-SHAYay' GAa'
here	dec <sub>ge</sub> hma <sub>g</sub>
if	hlee <sub>n</sub>
immediately	CHHET CHHEE <sub>n</sub>
in	a-THE <sub>g</sub>
in a little while	ta-khu-NAa'
not yet	DHAY <sub>gy</sub> BU(t) ya

**English****Simplified Burmese Spelling**

of	EEe'
on	a-paw aw
there	ho p ma u
soon	ma-cha g-gee p
some	a-CHHO'
to	go o
too much or very	a-hla n
up to	tee ee-go p
together	SOOo' PA gon
with	HNEE'
without	ma-SHEEe'
North	MYAoo'
South	ta oon
East	a-SHAYay'
West	a-NAoot

**Phrases of Common Use**

What date is today?	dhee go-NAYay' be s na-YEe' NAYay' LE s
What day of the week is it?	dhee ee NAYay' ba a NAYay' LE e
Today is the fifth of June	dhee ee NAYay' soo n LAa' NGA p YET NAYay'
Today is Tuesday	dhee ee NAYay' ee n ga g NAYay'
Come here	dee ee go p la s ba p or dee ee go p la p GEe
Come quickly	m ya n m ya n la p ba p
Go quickly	m ya n m ya n THO g ba g
Who are you?	khee n HYA p ba-dho o oo LE s

*English**Simplified Burmese Spelling*

Where is the nearest town?	a-NFEE ZON MYOON' be e hma a LE e
Be careful!	THA-DEEE'-THA a ba a
Where can I sleep?	choon dau aw be e hma a AYT na een dha-LEE e
Where is the village?	ya a be e hma a LE e
Where is the camp?	TE e be e hma a LE e
How far is the village?	ya a be e LAON WAY ay dha-LEE e
How far is the camp?	TE e be e LAON WAY ay dha-LEE e
What do you want?	khee n BYA a ba a lo o jee n dha-LEE e
Bring some food	S. LA zu-ya a ya go la a ba a
Bring some drinking water	THAON ya ay ya go la a ba a
Wait a minute	kha-NAA' SAON' nay ay ba a
I haven't any money	choon DAWUN' see ee hma a ngway ay ma-SHEEE' ba a
I have cigarettes	choon DAWUN' see ee hma a see ge-go-RET SHHEEE' de e
I am an American soldier	choon dau aw a-may ay-ree ge-ka n SEET THA a
I am your friend	choon dau aw khee n BYA a EEE' MAYK way ay PYEET te e

## NOTE ON THE WORD FOR "I"

The common word when addressing people your equal is *choon NO'*



## NOTES

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U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1944-O-583234













